

St James the Great Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100825
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	395580
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2012
Lead inspector	Joanna Toulson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Ann Cutting
Headteacher	Mr Edward Dunphy
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 May 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joanna Toulson

Additional inspector

Olson Davis

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed 10 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, documentation relating to safeguarding, teachers' lesson plans and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils reading. The questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 79 parents and carers were also scrutinised.

Information about the school

St James the Great Roman Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average. The largest group of pupils is of Black African heritage, with pupils from Black Caribbean backgrounds being the next largest group. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The largest group have autistic spectrum disorders. A few have speech, language and communication or specific learning difficulties. The school manages a breakfast club. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the leadership and management of the school.
- The school’s overall effectiveness is not satisfactory because the leadership of teaching and the management of performance are not sufficiently rigorous to bring about the improvements needed to secure good or better teaching and better than satisfactory achievement. Leaders do not check effectively enough the impact of their actions on accelerating pupils’ progress. The governing body does not have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing. Leaders are not demonstrating sufficient capacity to improve as they are not able to show that there has been a trend of sustained improvement since the last inspection. Improving standards in writing, which was an issue at the last inspection, has not been tackled effectively and remains an area for improvement. Achievement and the quality of teaching, which were judged good at the last inspection, have declined.
- Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress between Years 1 to 6 and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave school.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching usually caters for the needs of individual pupils, but sometimes lessons lack challenge for the more able. The teaching of phonics (the linking of letters with the sounds they represent) occasionally lacks rigour. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than in English and too often complete worksheets rather than write at length. The marking of pupils’ work is regular but the good practice evident in some classes is not applied consistently

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throughout the school.

- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory, as are pupils' attitudes to learning. Most pupils feel safe in school. The school's procedures for managing behaviour are clear and pupils respond to teachers' reminders to behave well. Behaviour is not as good now as at the time of the last inspection. The school's view that behaviour is outstanding is not endorsed by inspection evidence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the capacity and impact of leaders and managers by:
 - implementing a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluating teaching
 - ensuring that the governing body receives accurate information about the quality of teaching and how well groups of pupils are making progress so that it can hold the school robustly to account
 - ensuring that school improvement plans have measurable success criteria, based on pupils' achievement, to enable the school to evaluate the progress it is making towards achieving its aims
 - evaluating intervention strategies frequently to ensure they are effective in accelerating pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information well to always match work to the needs of individual pupils, especially those who are more able
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work is consistently of good quality.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing by:
 - taking swift action to ensure that staff are effectively trained in teaching phonics
 - reducing the number of worksheets that pupils use and providing pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects as well as in English.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the school with levels of skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and enter Year 1 with skills still slightly below the levels typically found. The pace of progress that pupils make as they journey through the school varies between different classes, linked to the variability in the quality of teaching. Pupils reach broadly average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Pupils' attainment in reading is average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement in writing is less secure it is in reading and mathematics. This is due to a lack of clarity in the

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teaching of phonics and too few opportunities for pupils to write at length.

Effective questioning in the best lessons contributes well to the development of language skills. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children were able to describe the colours of paint due to careful prompting by the adult, and in Key Stage 2, pupils developed their ability to write persuasively to advertise glue or 'Seaweed Hair Wraps'.

Children learn well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff visit children and their parents and carers in their homes before they start school and this supports good achievement because adults are able to tailor the learning to the needs of the individual child. Children enjoy working in small groups with an adult to explore their learning and have good opportunities to talk about their exciting activities, for example making a snail trail. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those initiated by the children, especially in the Nursery.

The school makes good use of expertise to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. For example, additional support by a reading recovery teacher is effective and this, together with satisfactory support from teaching assistants, ensures that these pupils make progress that is in line with similar groups nationally. There is no evident variation in the achievement of different groups of pupils, including boys and girls and those from Black African or Black Caribbean backgrounds compared to all pupils nationally. However, the school does not monitor this aspect of its work rigorously enough to ensure that any emerging gaps can be swiftly identified.

Parents and carers who returned the questionnaire feel their children achieve well. The inspection found that although there are pockets of good progress, it is inconsistent and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is typically satisfactory. Because only a small amount of teaching is good pupils' progress across the school is uneven. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and explain lesson objectives clearly. A lack of training, however, sometimes hinders teachers' ability to teach phonics well and pupils are confused about the difference between the names letters and the sounds they represent. There are too many worksheets used in all subjects and pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects other than in English. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, these pupils are often too reliant on the support of an adult to complete their task and not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to learn to work independently.

There are some examples of good assessment practice, including marking, where pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their work. However, this good practice is not applied consistently across the school. Insufficient use of assessment

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data means that sometimes teaching is not well matched to the needs of individuals and this slows the learning for more-able pupils. This was illustrated in a lesson in Key Stage 1 where more-able pupils found making words from 'medicine' too easy. In another lesson in Key Stage 2, the more-able pupils were not shown how to use adverbs effectively in their sentences.

Where teaching is good, teachers engage all pupils in learning, and rather than waiting for pupils to put their hands up, encourage pupils to record their answers on individual whiteboards so that they can check pupils' understanding before moving the lesson on. This strategy supports good learning in Year 6, with the teacher extending pupils' understanding in small, appropriate steps. Good relationships exist between adults and pupils, and pupils are encouraged to work cooperatively. This supports the satisfactory promotion of pupils' personal development.

The inspection findings do not support the view of parents and carers who feel that teaching is good. This is because only a minority of teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Where teaching is good and lessons move on quickly, pupils respond well, show positive attitudes and work well together. Sometimes, however, where teaching is less strong, pupils lose interest and teachers frequently have to remind pupils to stay on task. While adults manage the behaviour of pupils well, pupils are sometimes less able to manage their own behaviour.

Parents, carers and staff are generally positive about behaviour in the school, although a few parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that bad behaviour disrupts lessons. Several pupils interviewed during the inspection voiced concerns about behaviour and nearly one third of the pupils who completed the questionnaire feel that behaviour is only good sometimes. The inspection found that, over time, behaviour is satisfactory and that the school's procedures to promote positive behaviour, are clear and robust.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They know how to use the internet safely and the dangers of sharing personal information. Pupils in Year 6 can explain how to use public transport safely. Most pupils feel safe in school. The large majority of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire feel that the school deals satisfactorily with any incidents of bullying and pupils say that bullying is rare. They know that bullying which is unkind about someone's race, gender, appearance or disability is unacceptable. They are adamant that there is no racism in the school.

Pupils say they enjoy school and this is reflected in their high attendance, with most arriving promptly in the morning. The breakfast club provides a secure start to the day.

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Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate because systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work lack the clarity and rigour required to increase the rate of pupils' progress and to ensure teaching is at least good. The impact of interventions for pupils who need extra help is not evaluated to ensure that they are effective in accelerating pupils' progress. Plans for school improvement lack measurable success criteria based on pupils' achievement, which hinders the ability of the school and the governing body to track the progress it is making towards achieving its aims. Reports to the governing body tend to record actions taken rather than evaluate the impact of actions on pupils' achievements.

The capacity for further improvement is limited because leaders have not addressed the need to improve standards in writing, which was identified during the last inspection. Key areas of the school's work are less effective now than previously. The leadership of teaching since the last inspection has been inadequate. The management of performance and the monitoring of the quality of teaching are not carried out systematically and essential training for staff has not taken place. For example, although the school recognises the need to improve the teaching of writing, there has been no training in the teaching of phonics. Information about how well the school is doing is overly positive and as a result, the governing body has an inaccurate picture of the school. The governing body does, however, ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

Discrimination in any form is not tolerated and leaders promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily. This is particularly the case at a pastoral level given the level of care provided, particularly for pupils whose circumstances make them most likely to be vulnerable. The curriculum is satisfactory because it motivates pupils to make satisfactory progress and generally meets their needs. It promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development appropriately through, for example, assemblies, performing with other schools at the Royal Festival Hall, tending an allotment and visiting places of interest in London. The school has taken steps to promote the engagement of parents and carers in their children's learning but recognises that more could be done to reach those who may find working with the school difficult.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.



21 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James the Great Roman Catholic Primary School, London SE15 5LP

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. You told us you enjoy school. Your behaviour contributes to an orderly environment and you know how to keep yourselves safe. The teaching in your school is satisfactory and you make satisfactory progress in your learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because they are given many interesting activities to do which meet their needs well. Even so, we do not think that the school's leaders and the governing body are doing enough to ensure that the school improves all aspects of its work so that you can make faster progress than you currently do. Because of this, we have given your school a notice to improve. This means that another inspector will return in due course to check on how well things are going.

We have asked the adults that run your school including the governing body to make sure that:

- they have better information about how good the teaching is in your school and check how well you are learning if you receive additional help regularly
- you are always challenged to work hard, especially those of you who sometimes find learning easy, and that teachers' marking gives you good guidance about what you need to do next
- you make good progress in your writing by providing up-to-date training for your teachers and teaching assistants and through giving you more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.

You can help by always behaving well, even when you are not working with an adult and by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Toulson
Lead inspector

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